

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. An optional part of an apparatus, said optional part being sold
2 separately from an apparatus body, comprising:

3 a storage device for storing control information required for a
4 predetermined operation of said apparatus in a state where said optional
5 part is fitted thereto, said storage device being contactlessly accessible in
6 a distribution channel from a manufacturer to a consumer.

1 2. The optional part according to claim 1,

2 wherein storing said control information is any one of:

3 (1) storing said control information in said storage device not
4 having stored said control information;

5 (2) in said storage device storing incorrect control information,
6 changing said incorrect control information to correct control
7 information; and

8 (3) deleting operation prohibiting information from said storage
9 device storing said operation prohibiting information for prohibiting said
10 apparatus from performing said predetermined operation.

1 3. The optional part according to claim 1, wherein said control
2 information is stored in said storage device in the case where said
3 optional part is purchased properly at a retail store.

1 4. The optional part according to claim 1, wherein said control
2 information can be stored in said storage device by contactlessly
3 accessing said storage device from outside of a package packing said
4 optional part therein.

1 5. An apparatus, comprising:

2 an apparatus body; and

3 an optional part sold separately from said apparatus body,

4 wherein said optional part comprises a storage device for storing
5 control information required for a predetermined operation of said
6 apparatus in a state where said optional part is fitted thereto, said storage
7 device being contactlessly accessible from outside of a package, and

8 when said optional part is fitted to said apparatus body, said
9 apparatus body performs said predetermined operation only when said
10 control information is stored in said storage device.

1 6. An accessing device comprising:

2 an accessing means for contactlessly accessing a
3 contactlessly-accessible storage device provided on an optional part of an
4 apparatus, said optional part being sold separately from an apparatus
5 body, and for storing control information in said storage device of said
6 optional part, said control information being required for a
7 predetermined operation of said apparatus in a state where said optional
8 part is fitted thereto,

9 wherein said device is provided in a distributor of said optional

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10 part.

1 7. The device according to claim 6, wherein said device accesses said
2 storage device from outside of a package packing said optional part
3 therein.

1 8. A method for distributing an optional part, said method comprising
2 the steps of:

3 contactlessly accessing a contactlessly-accessible storage device
4 provided on said optional part in a distribution channel from a
5 manufacturer manufacturing said optional part of an apparatus to a
6 consumer, said optional part being sold separately from an apparatus
7 body; and

8 storing control information in said storage device of said optional
9 part, said control information being required for a predetermined
10 operation of said apparatus in a state where said optional part is fitted
11 thereto.

1 9. The method for distributing an optional part according to claim 8,
2 wherein storing said control information is any one of:

3 (1) storing said control information in said storage device not
4 having stored said control information;

5 (2) in said storage device storing incorrect control information,
6 changing said incorrect control information to correct control
7 information; and

8 (3) deleting operation prohibiting information from said storage
9 device storing said operation prohibiting information for prohibiting said
10 apparatus from performing said predetermined operation.

1 10. An optional part of an apparatus, said optional part being sold
2 separately from an apparatus body, comprising:

3 a storage device to which control information is writable from
4 outside in a state where said optional part is decompressedly packed by a
5 packaging material, said control information being required for a
6 predetermined operation of said apparatus in a state where said optional
7 part is fitted thereto.

1 11. The optional part according to claim 10,

2 wherein said control information is any one of:

3 (1) information for identifying a type of said apparatus;

4 (2) information for indicating a drive condition of said apparatus;

5 (3) information for indicating an operating condition during
6 maintenance of said apparatus; and

7 (4) information for identifying a party selling said optional part.

1 12. The optional part according to claim 10, wherein distribution
2 information required for a distribution process of said optional part is
3 further writable from outside to said storage device.

1 13. The optional part according to claim 12, wherein a storage region of

2 said storage device is divided into a region having information written
3 thereto by a manufacturer of said optional part, a region having
4 information written thereto in the distribution process, and a region
5 having information written thereto by said apparatus.

1 14. An ink cartridge comprising a container containing an ink therein
2 and a storage device, into and from which data is contactlessly writable
3 and readable, wherein said ink cartridge is packed in a manner that data
4 is writable and readable into and from said storage device when said ink
5 cartridge has not been used.

1 15. The ink cartridge according to claim 14, wherein said ink cartridge is
2 decompressedly packed.

1 16. The ink cartridge according to claim 14, wherein said ink cartridge is
2 hermetically packed.

1 17. The ink cartridge according to claim 14, wherein said ink is
2 deaerated.

1 18. The ink cartridge according to claim 14, to be used by being
2 mounted onto a recording apparatus, wherein said storage device
3 comprises:
4 a first region for storing control information necessary for said
5 recording apparatus to carry out a predetermined operation; and

- 6 a second region for storing information on an amount of the ink
7 contained in said ink cartridge.

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